DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 131 973 RC 005 538

AUTHOR Panchanadikar, K. C.; Panchanadikar, J.
TITLE Social Stratification and Mobility in a Rural Community (Mahi) in Gujarat, India.
PUB DATE Aug 76
NOTE 23p.; Paper presented at the World Congress of Rural Sociology (4th, Torun, Poland, August 1976)

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.83 HC-$1.67 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Adults; *Case Studies; Caste; *Change Agents; Cooperatives; Economically Disadvantaged; Foreign Countries; Government Role; Politics; Rural Development; *Rural Population; *Social Stratification; Social Structure; *Socioeconomic Status; Students; Voluntary Agencies
IDENTIFIERS *India (Gujarat); *World Congress of Rural Sociology (4th)

ABSTRACT

Analyzing the interaction between factors that are stable and factors that initiate change re: promotion of social mobility or crystalization of existing social stratification, this paper presents a case study of Mahi, a rural village in Gujarat, India. Utilizing data derived from two field studies (1961-1962 and March 1967-June 1967), the stable factors are analyzed in terms of the regional ethnolinguistic setting, the sub-regional ecology, and the caste composition of community settlements; the variables which initiate change are analyzed in terms of governmental measures, voluntary association enterprise, and government aided voluntary assistance. Mahi's socioeconomic characteristics are presented in narrative and tabular form and include: caste distribution of adult and student population and occupations; landed and landless households of agriculturalist and non-agriculturalist castes; and land distribution by size of holding and by class category. The political scene in Mahi, before and after introduction of the three tier rural local self-government known as Panchayati Raj (1963), is analyzed in terms of caste and class influence upon the three Mahi cooperatives and the seats filled in the seven Panchayats. In general, this paper indicates that India's established social stratification system has been altered somewhat by governmental policy but that poverty is manifest across all caste lines. (JC)

**********
* Documents acquired by ERIC include many informal unpublished *
* materials not available from other sources. ERIC makes every effort *
* to obtain the best copy available. Nevertheless, items of marginal *
* reproducibility are often encountered and this affects the quality *
* of the microfiche and hardcopy reproductions ERIC makes available *
* via the ERIC Document Reproduction Service (EDRS). EDRS is not *
* responsible for the quality of the original document. Reproductions *
* supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made from the original. *
**********

ED131973

FOURTH WORLD CONGRESS OF RURAL SOCIOLOGY

NINTH EUROPEAN CONGRESS OF RURAL SOCIOLOGY

August 9-13, 1976

Torun, Poland

THEME:

The Integrated Development of Human and Natural Resources:

The Contribution of Rural Sociology

Seminar 9: Stratification and social mobility of the rural population: implications for integrated development.

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION

THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY

RC 009538

# SOCIAL STRATIFICATION AND MOBILITY IN A RURAL COMMUNITY (MAHI) IN GUJARAT, INDIA

by

K.C. PANCHANADIKAR

and

J. PANCHANADIKAR

M.S. University of Baroda, India

and

(El Colegio de México, México 7, D.F.)

Paper presented at the

Seminar on "Stratification and Social Mobility of the Rural Population", in Group A 9 of the 4th. World Congress of Rural Sociology at Torun, Poland, August 1976.



pog.

# Social Stratification and Mobility in a Rural Community (Mahi) in Gujarat, India+

by

K.C. Panchanadikar

and

J. Panchanadikar

M.S. University of Baroda, India

## I
## Analytical Perspective

Social Mobility is an ongoing process of institutional change that restructures social stratification. In recent time since 1952, such a process of change in the rural community setting in India (in close relation with the changing urban setting) was initiated by the newly independent Government of India, under its Community Development Programme. Since considerable time prior to this, there has been an ongoing process of popular self-effort toward the same end undertaken by many voluntary agencies in many parts of the country. This paper proposes to discuss on the basis of empiric field data, the changing stratification situation in village Mahi (a pseudonym), a large sized village in the central sub-region in Gujarat. The actual field study in Mahi was conducted in two time intervals, namely, (i) from August 1961 to August 1962, (ii) March 1967 to June 1967. A part of the field data is used for purposes of this paper.

There are two types of situational variables involved in analysing social stratification and mobility in rural India. Firstly there are factors that are relatively stable, viz; (i) The regional ethno-linguistic setting, (ii) the sub-regional ecology, (iii) and the caste composition of community settlements especially at the rural level.

+This paper is being presented at the Seminar on "Stratification and Social Mobility of the Rural Population", in Group A:9, of the 8th. World Congress of Rural Sociology at Torun, Poland, 9-13 August 1976.

Besides there are three other variables that are newly introduced in the situation to initiate change, viz., (i) Governmental measures: Financial aid and technological know-how disseminated through the agency of Community Development Blocks and the Cooperative banking structure, to enlarge productive activity; instituted measures to promote education at various levels, to improve health and sanitary conditions, to inform and activate, family planning; the three tier rural local self-government known as the Panchayati raj introduced by stages.

(ii) Voluntary Associational Enterprise: Cooperatives of various types; innovative enterprise in agriculture, horticulture, cattle and sheep breeding; poultry farming, bee keeping, pisciculture, sericulture and dairying; familial and group enterprise in agro-industry, transport, warehousing and agri-commerce catering to the far flung and enlarging urban market in India; Welfare associations serving parochial interests of caste, religion or language.

(iii) Government aided Voluntary agencies: Educational and research units, hospitals, libraries and reading rooms, community service centres for children, youth and women.

This paper analyses the interaction between the factors that are stable and factors that initiate change, to the extent they are applicable in promoting social mobility or in crystallizing the existing social stratification in village Mahi.

## II

## Sub-regions in Gujarat

Gujarat is one of the 22 present day states in India, spread out approximately between lattitudes 20°-25° North and longitudes 68°-74° East, and bounded by the Arabian Sea (West), the Rann of Kutch (North), the Aravalli and Sahyadri ranges (north-east and east). Between these limits lie the fertile coastal plains and the Kathiawar (or Saurashtra) plateau. Gujarat could be broadly demarcated into four regions across the rivers, Tapti, Vatrak and Sabarmati. These could be distinguished in terms of soil, climate, crops, ecology and rural caste composition. The western sub-region specializes in groundnut; the northern in tobacco, cumin seeds, potato, dairying, cattle and sheep breeding; the central in tobacco, cotton, vegetables and dairying; the southern in cotton, timber, sugar cane and fruit horticulture. The central and the northern sub-regions have struck oil since the early sixties. However the indus-

try is managed by the central government. The main landowning castes with the respective subsidiary castes (labourer/tenant) in the four sub-regions are as follows. South: Anavil, Sunni Vora, Ooda, Matia and Koli, with Dubla and Dhed. Central: Leuwa and Baraiya, with Vaghri, Dhed and Chamar. North: Kaidwa, Anjana and Thakarda, with Dhed and Vaghri. West: Leuwa and Kaidwa with Dhed, Khant and Koli.

Gujarat in 1971[1] had a population of 26,697,475, in an area of 195,984, Sq. K.M. organized in 19 districts with 18,275 villages and 200 towns. Some vital details are: urban population 28.08%; rural 71.92%; literacy 35.79%, 46.11% for male, 24.75% for female; sex ratio 934; density per sq. K.M. 136. Gujarati with variant dialects is spoken all over. Kachhi in Kutch area is a variant dialect of Sindhi language. Gujarati has a rich literary tradition for over a thousand years. The Gujarati mercantile caste of Vania (Jain and Vaishnava) has been in the field of business, banking and industry from very early times. Since the British Colonial period Vanias, Parsis and other Gujarati castes have been the leading entrepreneurs in India and overseas.

The Central Sub-region: Charotar, Vakal and Kanam between the rivers Vatrak, Mahi, Dhadhar and Narmada respectively, constitute this fertile area. Staple cotton in the Narmada basin and tobacco in the Mahi basin and dairy industry all over are specialities of the sub-region. The milk producers' cooperative complex of Anand is the leading pioneer in India.

Leuwa and Baraiya are the main landowning peasant castes in the central sub-region. The untouchable Dheds (and Chamars) are their subsidiaries as labourers in most villages. Large villages generally have a mixed settlement of Leuwas and Baraiyas. Most of the medium and large villages have a full complement of artisan and servicing castes, working for payment in kind and cash. However these are a dependent marginal fringe in the rural economy and thus are far less important than what the recent anthropological work has projected. Chamars though artisan by ascription, have turned into agricultural labourers, because of their fairly large population size. This broadly is the social structure in the central sub-region.

## III

### Mahi Village: Community and Differentiation.

Mahi Village: Mahi (population 4168 in 1961) is situated at a motorable distance of 12 kilometers from Anand town, the administra-

tive headquarters of the Taluka with 77 villages. It is a railway junction of the Western railway linking Bombay and Ahmedabad. Several buses ply between Anand and Mahi each day. An approach road of two furlongs connects Mahi to the main highway.

The village square is a busy place surrounded by many offices and other buildings: the village panchayat, the Central Excise, the post office, three cooperatives, the Patidar Trust Guest House, the village hospital cum dispensary, the Rama temple and the village clock tower and reading room built on top of an imposing archway overlooking the village tank. There are also a few provision stores and a tea stall. The square serves as the village bus terminal. There are five outlets from the square, one of them leading to the main highway, where the new Public Health Centre is built at the corner. The high school, the primary schools and the Montessori unit are at some distance. The village has three khalis or tobacco warehouses. They purchase tobacco from the villages around, process and store it for later sale to distant points. Khalis provide seasonal employment especially to Dhed women.

Mahi village has 47 neighbourhoods grouped in five electoral wards. Baraiyas, Kachhias and the untouchables have their exclusive clustered neighbourhoods, whereas Leuwas have in their localities, the artisan and the servicing caste families including the Brahmins. The Leuwa neighbourhoods mostly have brick and stone buildings, quite a few being multistoried. Baraiya lanes have many thatched huts. The untouchable neighbourhood has evidently poor housing. Many Leuwa houses and a few others have household electric fittings. Drinking water for the entire village is available at a standpost built near the pond, with a section for the untouchables separated by a wall. Water is pumped from a well and supplied twice a day at specific hours. Some taps for washing clothes were provided at the approach steps down the adjacent pond. Nearby was a large trough for watering the animals.

Different Hindu faiths had their temples. There was a masjid, and a church for the Dheds who had converted to Christianity during a former famine. There is a cremation ground with a separate section for the untouchables. Each of the Baraiya lanes have their small temples of specific clan godesses. A medium-size platform dedicated to Verai Mata, the village mother godess, is important for all the Hindus. Every newly wed couple has to visit this magically potent religious symbol for customary offerings and benediction. The untouchables have their own mother godess, to whom offerings are made by the untouchable priests called Garoda. On some auspicious occasions, some affluent Leuwa families invited the whole village for a grand feast. Each caste would be seated in a separate line, though all in the village square itself which was specially cleaned for the

festive occasion. Food would be cooked by Brahmins and served by volunteers belonging to the highest castes, like the Leuwas. The Patidar Trust guest house could be used for wedding parties by any touchable caste for a nominal fee. So also its large utensils could be taken out on loan for a small charge. The untouchables too had their modest but similar arrangement for common use. The local dispensary financed by a wealthy Leuwa family served all castes without distinction, for a small fee. Similarly the local high school, the montessori unit and the two government primary schools for boys/girls were open to all caste groups. So were their sports meets, music, dance and drama performances free to all. The Rama temple at the village square arranged discourses, Harikathas, Kirtans, bhajans and other annual celebrations with music and singing parties. These were open to multicaste audience, though untouchables had to sit separately This was how the community living was organized for occupation, commerce, essential services, religious functions and life crisis situations. The artisans and the servicing castes served all for payment in kind or cash, with certain differentials. Untouchables had their own arrangements for servicing.

Tables 1, 2 and 3 which follow, reveal adult and student population, and occupation; landed and landless households; and land distribution; respectively.

## IV

## Land, Assets, Class Strata and Prospects for Mobility.

Leuwas are known as Patidars in Charotar, because in many villages, the entire land was held by Leuwa clans on collective revenue tenure known as pati or patti. Leuwa villages in and outside of Charotar without pati tenure are regarded as communities of Kanbi or ordinary peasants. Patidar villages in Charotar are grouped into endogamous unions called Gols. There is inter-Gol hypergamy. Similarly all Charotar Patidars partise hypergamy with Kanbis and extort high dowries. Gol hierarchy has been pragmatic. Affluent villages have been admitted to new membership and the impoverished ones have been dropped. Mahi village settled by ten clans descending from one Narsidas belong to the Gol of twenty-two villages. Kanbis are governed by customary kinship practices of the peasantry, namely, bride compensation, divorce, remarriage and succession for natural children. It is observed that Patidars too when impoverished, take to customary practices.

Table 1.- Caste-wise Distribution of Adult (1966) and student population (1967) in Mahi Village.

| | Caste | | Adult Population. | % | Student Population | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | XI Std. | High School Total. | College Total |
| | Agriculturist: | | | | | | |
| 1. | Leuwa | (farmer) | 869 | 44.06 | 33 | 289 | 59 |
| 2. | Baraiya-Patanwadia | (Koli tiller) | 541 | 27.43 | 1 | 24 | — |
| 3. | Dhed | (farm-hand untouchable) | 125 | 6.34 | 2 | 18 | 1 |
| 4. | Garoda | (Dhed-Shaman) | 13 | 0.66 | | 2 | |
| 5. | Vaghri | (ex-tribal) | 33 | 1.67 | | | |
| 6. | Kachhia | (Gardener) | 85 | 4.43 | 2 | 17 | 7 |
| | | | 1666 | 84.59 | | | |
| | Non-Agriculturist: (Land owning) | | | | | | |
| 7. | Chamar | (Tanner) | 52 | 2.64 | 1 | 12 | 1 |
| 8. | Valand | (Barber) | 40 | 2.02 | | 7 | |
| 9. | Suthar | (Carpenter) | 31 | 1.57 | 1 | 3 | |
| 10. | Brahmin | (Priest) | 25 | 1.26 | | 3 | 3 |
| 11. | Bhoi | (Bearer) | 19 | 0.96 | | | |
| 12. | Bhangi | (Sweeper) | 14 | 0.71 | | 3 | |
| 13. | Kumbhar | (Potter) | 12 | 0.61 | | 6 | 1 |
| 14. | Gosai | (Mendicant-Hindu) | 6 | 0.30 | | 2 | |
| 15. | Khambati Vora | (Trader-Muslim) | 51 | 2.58 | 1 | 13 | |
| | | | 250 | 12.65 | | | |



---

(Table 1.- Cont.)

| | Caste | | Adult Population. | % | Student Population XI Std. | High School Total. | College Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Non-Agriculturist: (Landless) | | | | | | |
| 16. | Soni | (Goldsmith) | 11 | 0.55 | | 1 | 1 |
| 17. | Fakir | (mendicant-Muslim) | 11 | 0.55 | | | |
| 18. | Bhil | (ex-tribal) | 8 | 0.40 | | 1 | |
| 19. | Darji | (tailor) | 5 | 0.25 | 1 | 2 | |
| 20. | Vania | (trader-Hindu) | 5 | 0.25 | | 1 | 2 |
| 21. | Mochi | (shoemaker) | 4 | 0.20 | 1 | 1 | |
| 22. | Luhar | (blacksmith) | 3 | 0.15 | | | |
| 23. | Ravalia | (cowherd) | 3 | 0.15 | | | |
| 24. | Od | (dredger) | 3 | 0.15 | | | |
| 25. | Dhobi | (washerman) | 2 | 0.10 | | | |
| 26 | Mali | (florist) | 1 | 0.05 | | | |
| | | | 56 | 2.80 | | | |
| | | Total: | 1972 | 100.04 | 43 | 405 | 75 |

Table 2.- Landed Assets and Landlessness among Agriculturist and Non-Agriculturist Castes of Mahi, 1966-67

| ste ricul rist. | Total Adult Popu- lation | Total No.of House holds | Land- less House holds | Land owning House holds | Land Ownership Pattern by khatas (Revenue Accounts) I Well- off (15.1 +acres) | II Comfor table (7.1 to 15 acres) | III Marginal (3.1 to 7 acres) | IV Poor (0.1 to 3 acres) | +Total Khata Holders (Land in acres) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| uwa | 869 | 314 | 127 (40.4%) | 187 (59.6%) | 6 (101-20) | 58 (534-04½) | 113 (507-05) | 174 (270-10) | 351 (1412-39½) |
| raiya | 541 | 183 | 125 (68.3%) | 58 (31.7%) | — | — | 8 ( 37-22) | 55 ( 63-17) | 63 (100-39) |
| ed | 125 | 55 | 45 (81.8%) | 10 (18.2%) | — | — | 1 ( 4-26) | 9 ( 11-06) | 10 (15-32) |
| roda | 13 | 6 | 5 (83.3%) | 1 (16.7%) | — | — | — | 1 ( 0-29) | 1 ( 0-29) |
| ghri | 33 | 12 | 10 (83.3%) | 2 (16.7%) | — | — | — | 2 ( 1-00) | 2 ( 1-00) |
| chhia | 85 | 27 | 27 (100%) | 0 ( 0 %) | — | — | — | — | Nil |
| tal A | 1666 | 597 | 339 (56.8%) | 258 (43.2%) | 6 (101-20) | 58 (534-04½) | 122 (549-13) | 241 (346-22) | 427 (1531-19½) |
| ne landowning Non-agriculturist Castes: | | | | | | | | | |
| tal B | 250 | 80 | 64 (80 %) | 16 ( 20 % ) | — | — | 6 ( 26-07) | 12 ( 16-18) | 18 (42-25) |
| and tal +B | 1916 | 677 | 403 (59.5%) | 274 (40.5%) | 6 (101-20) | 58 (534-04½) | 128 (575-20) | 253 (363-00) | 445 (1574-04½) |
| | | | | | 6.42% | 33.92% | 36.60% | 23.06% | 100 % |

te: Figueres in brackets indicate total land in acres and gunthas (40 gunthas= 1 acre) held by the number of khata holders, noted above the bracket.

Some households have their land assets under more than one khata (title account).

Table 3.- Caste-wise Distribution of the Khatas (accounts) according to land size of the Khatedars (Title holders).

| Class Category | Land size in acres | Agricultural Castes: Leuwa | Baraiya | Dhed | Garoda | Vaghri | Total | Non-Agr. Total | Grand Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| IV Poor | 0.1-1 | 60 | 25 | 4 | 1 | 2 | 92 | 6 | 98 |
| | 1.1-2 | 59 | 21 | 3 | | | 83 | 2 | 85 |
| | 2.1-3 | 55 | 9 | 2 | | | 66 | 4 | 70 |
| | | 174 | 55 | 9 | 1 | 2 | 241 | 12 | 253 |
| | | (49.6%) | (87.3%) | (90 %) | (100 %) | (100 %) | (56.4 %) | (66.7%) | (56.8% ) |
| III Marginal | 3.1-4 | 50 | 2 | | | | 52 | 3 | 55 |
| | 4.1-5 | 24 | 3 | 1 | | | 28 | 1 | 29 |
| | 5.1-6 | 26 | 3 | | | | 29 | 1 | 30 |
| | 6.1-7 | 13 | | | | | 13 | 1 | 14 |
| | | 113 | 8 | 1 | | | 122 | 6 | 128 |
| | | (32.2%) | (12.7%) | (10 %) | | | (28.6 %) | (33.3%) | (28.8% ) |
| II Comfor-table | 7.1-8 | 15 | | | | | 15 | | 15 |
| | 8.1-9 | 18 | | | | | 18 | | 18 |
| | 9.1-10 | 6 | | | | | 6 | | 6 |
| | 10.1-11 | 5 | | | | | 5 | | 5 |
| | 11.1-12 | 7 | | | | | 7 | | 7 |
| | 12.1-13 | 3 | | | | | 3 | | 3 |
| | 13.1-14 | 2 | | | | | 2 | | 2 |
| | 14.1-15 | 2 | | | | | 2 | | 2 |
| | | 58 | | | | | 58 | | 58 |
| | | (16.5%) | | | | | (13.6 %) | | (13.0 %) |
| I Well-off | 15.1-20 | 5 | | | | | 5 | | 5 |
| | 20.1-25 | 1 | | | | | 1 | | 1 |
| | | 6 | | | | | 6 | | 6 |
| | | ( 1.7%) | | | | | ( 1.4 %) | | ( 1.4 %) |
| Total Khatas | | 351 | 63 | 10 | 1 | 2 | 427 | 18 | 445 |
| | | (100 %) | (100 %) | (100 %) | (100 %) | (100 %) | (100 %) | (100 %) | (100 %) |
| Total Land Acres | | 1412-39½ | 100-39 | 15-32 | 0-29 | 1-0 | 1531-19½ | 42-25 | 1574-04½ |
| % | | 89.8% | 6.4% | 1.0% | .04% | .06% | 97.3% | 2.7% | 100 % |

As brought out in Table 1, Leuwas constitute the largest single caste (44.06%) in Mahi followed by Baraiya-Patanvadia (27.43%), Dhed (6.34%), Garoda (0.66%) and Kachhia (4.43%). There are 17 servicing and artisan castes, including Brahmins (1.26%), serving the patrons (jajaman) in the community as parijans (client). Electoral adult strength is one of the important dimensions of political power, under rural local self-government of the Panchayati raj. The terms "agriculturist" and "non-agriculturist" as used here, imply traditionally ascribed occupational position in the rural community. "Main" agriculturist castes are those that own the major quantum of land. "Subsidiary" agriculturist castes are those that cultivate land on share-cropping basis, and/or work as wage labourers; some of these households may also own a little land under the category "poor".

Land in rural India (80.09% rural population per 1971 census) is a scarce resource unequally distributed between castes constituting a revenue village, and interestingly betweeen households constituting a caste. Class stratification within even the most landowning caste like the leuwas of Mahi, as revealed in Tables 2 and 3, would testify that the concept of "dominant caste" given much currency by anthropologists who have recently worked on village India, is nothing but a myth. In Mahi only a small number of households of Leuwas own most of the land and the majority of Leuwas are either totally landless or are very poor owners of very little land as would be seen below. Landownership in large and medium sized villages, vests with more than one leading caste, and each of these is sharply stratified into class divisions. As such there is no single dominant caste in such villages. This has been corroborated[2] in our studies of 3 more large villages, one each in the other 3 sub-regions, in continuation with the Mahi study. Villagers in all these communities , have tended to form competing factions along class cleavages rather than maintain caste unity.

Land data in Mahi has been grouped under four class categories, namely, 0.1 to 3 acres as poor, 3.1 to 7 acres as marginal, 7.1 to 15 acres as comfortable and 15.1 plus acres as well-off. These categories are based on the then prevailing land prices, in Mahi during 1961-1967, namely, Rs. 2500 to 3500 per acre depending on quality and proximity to the village. With facility for irrigation, the price would be quoted up to Rs. 5000 per acre. These prices were based on a calculation of about 30-40% return on land valuation, and by the incidence of recurring and capital expenditure over earnings by village standards. Wage rates at the time, for agricultural labour remained highly competitive and exploitative, at Rs. 1.50 to 2 for men and Rs. 1 to 1.25 for women for an eight to ten hours workday; work being available generally for 20 days a month, during the sowing and harvest seasons covering about 9 months in a year. This wage rate had stood steady between 1960-1967, despite incidence of rising inflation.

Table 2 gives a distribution of land owned by caste-wise households, landed and landless households and the total households of land

owning castes distributed as poor, marginal, comfortable and well-off class categories. Table 3 gives a caste-wise distribution of land by class categories, in a serial interval of one from 0.1 to 25. Measure of land was an Acre of 40 Gunthas (equal to 0.40468 hectares or 4.840 sq. yards) in official government records, when the field data were collected. Hectare unit was adopted in India, later.

Leuwas of Mahi (44.06% of population) own 1412-39½ acres of land out of a total of 1574-04½ acres of cultivable land, i.e., 89.8%. The next large caste of Baraiya-Patanwadia (27.4% population) owns a meagre 101 acres i.e., 6.4% of the land. All the remaining four ascribed agriculturist castes, namely, Dhed, Garoda, Vaghri and Kachhia (13.10% population) own a paltry 17-21 acres between them. Actually Kachhias own not a bit of land in Mahi at present.

Nine of the ascribed castes of non-agriculturists (12.65% population) have come to own 42-25 acres of land which they mostly farm out for cultivation by tenants on a share-cropping basis. Only the Chamars cultivate their land themselves. Interestingly, Brahmins who too are ascribed non-agriculturists, own 21-08 acres, i.e., about half of 42-25 acres. Most others, especially, Gosai, Khambati Vora and Bhoi households have acquired their land from peasants when they were in difficulty.

However the above delineation in terms of caste-wise ownership of land is somewhat deceptive. It completely camouflages the unsuspected situation of sharp class divisions among landowners of each caste, as also the clear destitution of a sizable number of landless households even among the so-called landed castes like the Leuwas, not to mention other castes that are less fortunately placed in the community living.

It may be noticed from Table 3, that amongst the actual landowning Leuwas, only 1.7% are well-off, 16.5% are comfortable, and 32.2% are marginal who can barely manage to make two ends meet. (These are valuations in the context of conditions in rural India, and bear little or no comparison to conditions in the developed countries). Marginal category among Baraiya landowners is 12.7%. Among the remaining landowning castes, households that fall in the marginal category are 7.7%. This leaves 49.6% of Leuwa landowners, 87.3% Baraiya landowners, and 92.3% of all the other caste landowners in the poor or submarginal category. These households naturally have to take to tenancy and/or labour for making the ends meet.

However the more revealing picture of utter poverty of rural living can be had from figures concerning totally landless households-even among Leuwas. Incidence of landless destitution reveals that the implied class homogeneity of leading landowner castes in rural India is just another delusion, useful to mobilize the unsuspecting belief among caste members of being uniformly well-off and dominant. It is both erroneous and naive. Landless households among the so-called landowning castes of Mahi are brought out in Table 2, Viz., 40.4% Leuwa, 68.3%

80% are landless. The remaining landless castes of non-agriculturist,



Baraiya-Patanwadia, 81.8% Dhed, 83.3% Garoda, 83.3% Vaghri, and 100% Kachhia, giving an overage of 56.8% for this group of landless destitute households. This exposes the sharp class division even within the leading landed caste of Leuwas. Further, among the landowning castes of non-agriculturists, with no material resources whatsoever to fall back on, except day-to-day labour when available for about 20 days a month during the nine seasonal working months, are no better than sub-marginal destitutes. This then is the appalling picture of living conditions in a fertile sub-region of the so-called affluent and advanced regional state of Gujarat. It may be noted here that the artisan and servicing work in the village economy is distributed more or less permanently between fixed patron and client relations, and as such is relatively non-competitive. No parijan can ever hope to get well-off within the village economy. Moreover parijan households by and large never take to agricultural labour, even while their work is submarginally remunerative. In this respect a parijan differs from an ascribed agriculturist who never hesitates to be a labourer when necessary. Thus the parijan urban migrants have tended to seek lower white collar jobs rather than the better paying manual jobs. When some of them who make good and return, and manage to buy some land in the village, they almost always get it cultivated by share-cropping tenants. A parijan's stake in the village economy is always marginal.

Migration: The situation of poverty in Mahi has given rise to two trends, namely, urban migration and education of children. As already noted many villagers have migrated inland as well as abroad in search of better prospects. Earlier migrant families are generally helpful in searching suitable positions and offering board and lodge on credit in the initial period. Only a few migrants have been able to make good and have invested locally in land, houses and tobacco khalis. They have also made sizable welfare grants for schools, hospital and water-works. However, these instances of high success are few. Many others have left the village for good for small white collar jobs. The other more prevalent form of migration is for the seasonal work in cotton ginning, road and building construction, as well as for harvesting in other sub-regions. When such work is available in the neighbouring towns and villages, workers commute daily and continue to stay in the village. Some also take up work in factories in the nearby towns. Seasonal and commuting work are preferred as workers do not get up-rooted from the native village. Students who attend colleges generally seek openings in nearby or distant towns and become urbanites for good. It is in this context that the effort in educating the younger generation needs to be looked into.

Education: Data on students in Table 1 reveal how different castes have shown differential awareness and response to educational facilities as a means to improve economic opportunities to their next generation. Mahi has two primary schools directly run by the State department of education. Besides a voluntary association -Mitra Mandal- mainly supported by Leuwa munificience runs a high school and a Montes-

sori unit with state aid and individual donations. This paper highlights only the high school and the college going students, because of their immediate relevance to urban white collar employment at some level. Establishment of the Vallabh Vidyanagar University complex and other affiliated colleges at Anand have brought higher education within cycling and commuting distance for Mahi. Besides some students commute to Nadiad and some reside in Baroda for certain specialized studies like medicine, engineering, architecture, commerce and teaching.

Despite the scholarships, freeships and other facilities offered by the state, the backward classes are hardly anywhere near the Leuwas in pursuit of education. Out of a total of 405 high school students, the proportion of 289 Leuwas (177 boys, 112 girls), to 24 Baraiyas (all boys only) has little comparison to their respective population percentages, namely, 44.06% and 27.43% respectively. In contrast, Dhed, Kachhia, Valand, Kumbhar, Chamar and Khambati Vora seem to be positively inclined to send boys and girls (excepting the latter two castes) for high school studies. However 112 Leuwas girls in high school is a record figure. Baraiyas don't seem to believe in girls' education. The figures for the final class XI in the high school are more striking with 33 Leuwas (14 boys, 19 girls) out of 43 students (22 boys, 21 girls), vis-a-vis a single student each for Baraiya, Chamar, Suthar and Vora, and 2 each for Dhed and Kachhia. This points to the fact that non-Leuwas are making a recent entry to high school education and hence have very few who are at the finishing stage ready to enter college or to take up a gainful white collar urban employment.

The college scene is much more disparate. Out of a total of 75 college attending students, 59 (49 boys, 10 girls) are Leuwa. The only other castes worth mentioning in this regard are Kachhia with 7 boys and Brahmins with 2 boys and 1 girl in college. Leuwa students alone vis-a-vis other groups, have spread out into a number of branches of college education, such as, arts, science, commerce, agriculture, medicine, engineering, architecture and teaching. Others have mainly concentrated in the arts course only. A number of non-Leuwa students drop out both from high school and college to take up lower white collar jobs. Their families do not have the financial background to support them till graduation.

Thus the economic disparities of class, more or less get reflected and reinforced in educational openings and achievement and in consequence in the professional advancement of these rural castes. The urban advanced castes have had a long lead in this respect, ever since the first universities were established in India, in the late 1850's - a century and a quarter earlier. Thus education in actual operation advances those of the rural castes that are already economically advanced. Not a very hopeful augury for planned development of an ex-colonial society like India!

V

## Caste and Class Influence in Authority Structure: Economic and Political

Cooperatives: There are three cooperative business associations organized for productive and/or marketing purposes in Mahi (i) Milk Producers' Cooperative, 1950, collecting and supplying milk to the dairy complex of Kaira District Milk Producers' Union, Anand, to which it is affiliated.

(ii) The Sahakari Vikas Mandal, 1947, alternately known as the Multipurpose Cooperative, presently supplies pumped water for irrigation purposes through a network of pipelines. At its inception it used to ply passenger buses which had to be closed down when the Gujarat State nationalized bus transport.

(iii) The Seva Sahakari Mandali, 1962, collects and markets vegetable crops, especially cauliflower, cabbage and egg-plant to distant urban centres. The cooperative had twice closed down due to initial splits, while still working informally before registration.

It may be noted in this context that there are large individual enterprises in Mahi, dealing in collection and sale of milk and vegetable and also sale of water for lift irrigation. In fact some of the real large dealers do not join cooperatives at all as was observed at certain other places also. Cooperatives are mainly unions of small scale producers under leadership of a medium level enterprising producer. Interestingly, even some of the leading members of the cooperatives such as, the Multipurpose Cooperative, deal in irrigation water with impunity, against cooperative rules. Water for irrigation being a scarce and valued commodity, and the few wells in the village being owned by a few families, a new form of exploitative credit has come to stay in Mahi and elsewhere in the other 3 sub-regions. Water is supplied as enforced credit, with an agreement for crop-sharing up to 50%. The needy medium and small farmers have little choice in the matter. So far government has not taken notice of this exploitative credit.

Similarly there are large private vegetable dealers who purchase good standing crop on advance payment to the small farmer who has no further responsibility and who is also employed on steady wages to work on his own crop till the harvest is in. In some cases the entrepreneurs have started a putting-out system by supplying seed and fertilizer on credit. This held good to some extent even in case of tobacco crop, especially on a large scale in the northern sub-region. Even in this case government has kept aloof from this unregistered forward trading and credit or money lending.

The Milk Producers' Cooperative is a pioneering and very successful venture of the type in India. In Anand itself it has an able competitor in the Polson Dairy Company Private Ltd. Besides milk collection and transport in special cantainer vans, twice a day, the cooperative offers

special veterinary and insemination services for cattle, supplies fodder, cotton seeds and fertilizer at lower prices, and advances loans for purchase and breeding of quality cattle.

Notwithstanding occasional irregularities and exposures, and factional tensions for control, especially at annual elections of office-bearers, all the three cooperatives are viable and managed efficiently with high dividend returns to members, the best performance being that of the Milk Producers' Cooperative. In 1961-62 it earned the highest profits to the tune of Rs. 41,304 and disbursed Rs. 19,533 as dividends. In 1965-66 it had capital assets worth Rs. 230,792 and a reserve fund of Rs. 84,644. During the year, its sale of milk amounted to Rs. 266,964, fertilizer of Rs. 98,680, cotton seeds of Rs. 28,699, Amulgrain of Rs. 44,850, clarified butter of Rs. 12,424 and drinking water on contract to the Panchayat worth Rs. 9,179.

Thus the agriculturists of Mahi village are getting socialized in the effective and efficient management of collective and cooperative business enterprises. A detailed picture of the threefold cooperative activity in Mahi could be had from Table 4. Table 5 delineats the undulating political scene in Mahi, before and after introduction of the three tier rural local self-government known as Panchayati Raj in 1963. The community development programme had been initiated earlier in 1958.

Table 4 reveals the commanding position of Leuwas in all the three cooperatives with 77% shareholders, 84.9% shares and 91.2% face value of shares. Among non-Leuwas, Baraiyas and Khambati Voras matter to an extent in two cooperatives and Chamars in one. For the rest they have been got together to give a multicaste appearance, especially some with a single shareholder and share, as in case of Garoda, Vaghri, Bhangi, Gosai and the four landless castes -Soni, Darji, Vania and Dhobi- among the rest who have no stake in agricultural business. In the cooperative for lift irrigation, the share value is Rs. 25 each, and the Leuwa control is overwhelming with 92.6% shareholders, and 97.3% shares and share amount. This cooperative has a solitary Baraiya shareholder -a ridiculous figure indeed vis-a-vis their 27.43% adult population and 6.4% land holdings.

These differentials of involvement by different castes, reflect in the pattern of authority distribution in the three cooperatives. In each of the cooperatives there is an executive council with a management committee consisting of chairman, secretary, honorary secretary, local auditor and accountant. The total composition of the executive councils and the management committees of the 3 cooperatives, over the years upto 1966 was as follows: Milk Producers' Cooperative (1953-66), Executive Council members 123, and management committee members 37; The Sava Sahakari Cooperative for vegetable

Table 4.- Membership and Economic Assets of the three Cooperatives in Mahi 1966-67.

| Caste. | Milk Producers' Cooperative | | Seva Sahakari (Multipurpose) Mandali | | Sahakari Vikas Mandal (Land Development) | | Total for three Cooperatives | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Share holders | Shares held (Rs. 5 each) | Share Holders | Shares held (Rs.5 each) | Share Holders | Shares held (Rs.25 each) | Share Holders | Shares held | Share amount in Rs. |
| Leuwa | 399 | 564 | 298 | 675 | 125 | 514 | 822 | 1753 | 19,045 |
| Baraiya | 125 | 132 | 22 | 29 | 1 | 1 | 148 | 162 | 830 |
| Dhed | 9 | 11 | 1 | 1 | | | 10 | 12 | 60 |
| Garoda | 1 | 1 | | | | | 1 | 1 | 5 |
| Vaghri | 1 | 1 | | | | | 1 | 1 | 5 |
| Kachhia | 3 | 3 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 4 | 6 | 8 | 120 |
| Chamar | 15 | 16 | | | | | 15 | 16 | 80 |
| Valand | 6 | 8 | 2 | 3 | | | 8 | 11 | 55 |
| Suthar | 3 | 3 | 2 | 25 | | | 5 | 28 | 140 |
| Brahmin | 5 | 7 | 2 | 7 | 1 | 1 | 8 | 15 | 95 |
| Bhoi | 5 | 5 | 3 | 4 | | | 8 | 9 | 45 |
| Bhangi | 1 | 1 | | | | | 1 | 1 | 5 |
| Kumbhar | 2 | 3 | 1 | 1 | | | 3 | 4 | 20 |
| Gosai | | | 1 | 1 | | | 1 | 1 | 5 |
| Khambati Vora | 7 | 8 | 10 | 16 | 2 | 3 | 19 | 27 | 195 |
| Rest (five) | 4 | 5 | 3 | 5 | 4 | 5 | 11 | 15 | 175 |
| Total | 586 | 768 | 346 | 768 | 135 | 528 | 1067 | 2064 | 20,880 |
| Leuwa | 399 | 564 | 298 | 675 | 125 | 514 | 822 | 1753 | 19,045 |
| % | (68.1) | (73.4) | (86.1) | (87.9) | (92.6) | (97.3) | (77 ) | (84.9) | (91.2) |
| Non-Leuwa | 187 | 204 | 48 | 93 | 10 | 14 | 245 | 311 | 1,835 |
| % | (31.9) | (26.6) | (13.9) | (12.1) | ( 7.4) | ( 2.7) | (23 ) | (15.1) | ( 8.8) |

Table 5.- Caste-wise. Distribution of Seats filled in the Seven Panchayats in Mahi, 1941-1965.

| ste | Seats filled in Seven Panchayats. | | | | | | | | Head-Roles | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | I May 1941 | II+ Oct. 1944 | III Dec. 1947 | IV Mar. 1952 | V+ Mar. 1956 | VI+ Feb. 1961 | VII Feb. 1965 | Total | S | DS | Total |
| uwa | | | | | | | | | | | |
| en | 6 | 8 | 7 | 6 | 12 | 8 | 7 | 54 | 6 | 3 | 9 |
| omen | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 8 | | 1 | 1 |
| raiya- atanwadia | 2 | 2 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 3 | 3 | 19 | 2 | 2 | 4 |
| ed (Christi) | 1 | 1 | - | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 6 | - | 1 | 1 |
| amar | | | | 1 | 1 | | 1 | 3 | | | |
| ohhia | 1 | | 1 | | 1 | | 1 | 4 | 1 | | 1 |
| hers | | | | 1 | | | 1 | 2 | | | |
| tal | 11 | 12 | 11 | 13 | 20 | 14 | 15 | 96 | 9 | 7 | 16 |
| tal euwa | 7 | 9 | 8 | 7 | 13 | 10 | 8 | 62 | 6 | 4 | 10 |
| tal on-Leuwa | 4 | 3 | 3 | 6 | 7 | 4 | 7 | 34 | 3 | 3 | 6 |

ote: + Includes Bye-elections.

S - Sarpanch/chairman.

DS- Deputy Sarpanch.

(1962-66), 41 and 14 respectively; and Sahakari Vikas Cooperative for lift irrigation (1965-66), 70 and 28 respectively. Only once in the Milk Producers' Cooperative, there were 2 Baraiyas on the executive committee. Every other of the above members were exclusively Leuwas. Thus the Leuwa control of the three cooperatives has been almost total. This is due to the fact that Leuwas have had a fairly long experience of successful business enterprise and benefit of education.

However it is necessary to note that the overwhelming majority of the Leuwa members and the large number of elites competing for the few hence scarce authority positions have created a situation of cleavage and factions among Leuwas. Thus Baraiya members who are in some strength in two cooperatives, especially in the milk producers' cooperative with 125 members out of 586, are in a position to tip the balance. Since almost all Leuwa households and two-thirds of Baraiya households are members, apart from eighteen other castes, the annual election of the milk producers' cooperative is quite an event in the village, what with its house to house canvassing and lobbying. Leuwa women who too are members, add a good deal of colour to the support building activity for their kinsmen who are contestants. This election is only next in terms of involvement and fierce contests as are fought in the panchayat elections, for control of political authority in the village. Nothing can beat the Leuwa peasantry in the election heat!

Rural development and class strata: Mahi had a village panchayat right since 1941, based on limited franchise. After Independence in 1947, universal franchise was ushered in. This has fundamentally changed the pattern of political paritiopation in the village. In 1958, the Community Development Programme was introduced in the Anand Taluka of which Mahi village is a constituent. The non-Leuwas of Mahi, have now come to realize the importance of their electoral majority (55.94%) giving rise to a combination of Baraiya, Dhed and Kachhia leadership. The reserved seats, two each for women and for the scheduled castes (ex-untouchables) have been an additional element in the manipulative politics between different factions amongst the Leuwa elites. As revealed in Table 5, head roles of Sarpanch and deputy sarpanch have come to be shared with these economically backward groups. A few have gained some spoils. Non-Leuwas have had to be accomodated to memberships of various committees of the sitting panchayats.

Faction leaders among Leuwas have repeatedly sought to solicit votes in the non-Leuwa neighbourhoods, and to bargain with their elected leaders for alliances in the panchayat council. However the unending rivalries have resulted in bickerings and resignations leading to three bye-elections respectively in 1944, 1956 and 1961. Political power had shifted to unscrupulous elements who could manipulate combinations and capture power. They made good economically at the cost of three welfare shemes which were sanctioned for the village under the Community Development Programme of the Government of India, namely, the Water Works Scheme

to supply drinking water, the Public Health Centre Scheme, and the scheme for an all weather approach road linking the village with the main highway. The entire village was scandalized and upset over this misappropriation and in 1965 was elected a dependable panchayat council of economically successful farmers, to manage the village affairs. However the narrowly defeated unescrupulous leadership is only temporarily lying low, awaiting its next opportunity to manipulate voting at the next polls.

Lastly it is necessary to note that the political instability has hardly affected the more important distribution of developmental credit to farmers under the new Community Development Programme of the Government of India. The loans and grants have been for purposes of agricultural development, such as, purchase of machines, pump sets, quality seeds and fertilizers etc., and improvement of land by levelling, bunding, planting trees and sinking wells. Since credit worthiness is linked with mortgages, the entire benefit of 20 loans worth Rs. 67,750 has gone to 12 leading Leuwa families and/or their kin. Interestingly, one of the loanees for Rs. 23,000, was an owner of Tobacco Khali, who had earlier donated Rs. 1,41,000 to various voluntary welfare activities in the village.

This is how the rural politicization under the new three tier Panchayat Raj local self-government, has had to adjust its developmental planning and policies to the existing rural class stratification, such as in village Mahi.

References.-

1.(i) India Annual 1974. Publication Division, Govt. of India, New Delhi, p.p. 8-15,51

(ii) Census of India, Final Pupulation Series I, India 1971. Govt. of India, New Delhi. pp. 3-4, 34-78, 140-154.

2.Panchanadikar K.C. and J., Determinants of Social Structure and Social Change in India.
Popular Prakashan, Bombay, 1970, pp. 163-166.